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A Trip to Plutopia

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A Trip to Plutopia

BY EMANUEL HALDEMAN-JULIUS.

Plutopia is Greek for Hog Island. It is still in the experimental stage. The dream back of this venture is to try out the latest ideas in exploitation, and if successful the plan is to be applied generally.

Plutopia is the heaven of the exploiters, the haven of the twelve percenters, the paradise of the dividendists. It is a small body of land completely surrounded by graft.

The system of government is simplicity epitomized—in fact, there is no government. It is sublimated anarchy. The administration of affairs at Plutopia approximating perfection, there is no need for an organized government.

At present, there are 50,000 inhabitants at Plutopia. All but 500 are working people.

Let me begin with the 49,500. When one describes the first he has practically described the last, for they are about alike in dress, habits and tastes. They do not have names; each has his own number and answers to it like a convict.

I had occasion to interview No. 31497. He told me he was satisfied with the way things were run and hoped there would never be a change. He was very thankful to the 500 in the palaces, because they gave him an opportunity to work twelve hours each day in one of the rolling mills. He said the first thing he learned was to believe that the 49,500 who worked should do nothing but work, while the remaining 500 who worked not should do everything but work. He confessed this was a difficult theory to get into his head, but as his head had never been overtaxed in any way he managed to adopt the idea.

"At present," he said, "it seems

that I always believed that we were supposed to work all the time. The plan is easy to understand. We have absolutely no worries, and we are taken care of as well as we've been taught to expect."

This point needed explanation, which 31497 was glad to supply. An inventor in the employ of the 500 Plutopists had produced a pill, which was placed on the tongue and permitted to dissolve. Three pills went to a worker each day. It was considered sufficient to keep him strong enough to work twelve hours each day. As for clothes, wood pulp was used for the manufacture of paper sacks, on the back of which was printed the number of the worker.

One huge building housed the 49,500, each being assigned to his room which measured six by eight feet. The lights were turned off at 8:50. Once a year, on Christmas Eve, all were given free tickets to a movie. It

was figured out scientifically that the upkeep of each hand was exactly 11 cents and four mills a day.

No. 31497 said one good feature about the new system at Plutopia was that the men did not have to take care of their families. In fact, they were not permitted to have families. The women were housed in a separate building. The children were sent to a sort of an orphanage where they were educated to take their place in the industrial order when they become of age, which was placed at nine years.

This is highly interesting. Let us now turn our gaze towards the remaining 500.

Where the 49,500 were housed in one building, there was a palace for each of the beneficiaries of Plutopia. Having solved the problem of labor, and having cut down expenses to the lowest possible point, the income was

enormous. They no longer figured in dollars and cents. They struck off currency that began at $100,000, because they never cared to bother with less, as it was considered very discommoding to be cluttered up with a lot of loose change. While they believed it was ideal for the workers to partake of food-pills three times each day, they preferred to satisfy their gastronomical desires with more tangible edibles. They imported chefs who were, in reality, Arabian magicians who waved a wand and brought rare dishes from their culinary alchemy.

There is, as we have already mentioned, no government in Plutopia. The 500 have things arranged so precisely that there is no need for a police force. By training the 49,500 with the utmost care there is no need to waste money on policemen, constables and the like. As for courts, they also were abolished, as they are con-

sidered unnecessary expenses. In the old days, the capitalists spent huge sums in their courts, but the science of controlling labor through psychology enabled them to discard the expensive system, at least in this experiment station at Plutopia.

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One of the most distinguished looking of the 500, when inteviewed, was quite ready to talk.

"Here is the ideal system at last," said the Plutopist, unable to conceal his satisfaction. "I'm sure that it will be only a question of time before the world will follow our methods. This is the last word in organization. We have absolutely no doubts about our hands. They are nothing more than hands, because we are careful that nothing should get into their craniums except what we want lodged there. There is the secret of success. Our hands are not permitted to study, once they are given a place in

our mills, because study after working hours is tiring and throws our whole schedule out of whack. You see, we have just so many calories in the three pills the hand gets each day, and if he wastes any effort we might be forced to give him four, and that would increase expenses one-third of a cent, which we could never consider.

"Besides, thinking is bad for contentment. We don't like them to think about anything but their work. If there is any thinking to be done around here, we take the job on our own shoulders."

"What must be done before a person can become one of the 500?" the Plutopist was asked.

"Nothing. We have a closed corporation and we try to pass the property on only to our blood relatives. Sometimes we reach out and invite outsiders. But the best method is that of inheritance. We got it from our

parents, and our children will get it from us. It's much like being a crown prince."

"How about the 49,500? Do they stand a chance to join your 500?"

"Of course they do. They have a wonderful chance. If we happen to like one, we could have him admitted to our ranks by voting on the question. A unanimous vote is needed, however. But that doesn't alter the fact that our hands have an equal chance to take our places."

"Have you ever admitted one of your hands?"

"No, not yet. We may some day."

"Aren't you a little afraid that this army of hands might get organized and throw your friends into the discard?"

"Ah, you mean: Are we afraid of Socialism? Not a whit. Our hands are too well trained. You already

understand how we take them through our training school and turn them out perfect workers. That is our strongest argument. Our scientists are now at work on a still bigger idea. This is confidential, of course."

"Certainly," I answered. "Not a word will be said about it."

"Very well," he answered. "See that it goes no further. We are working on a wonderful idea. We see the possibility of doing away entirely with our expensive training school!"

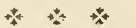
This was interesting. Urged to continue, he added:

"If nature is able to give us human beings with hands, eyes, ears and finger nails, why not have nature go still further and present us with human beings who already have the ideas we try so hard to inculcate?"

This was too brilliant for syntax. They had hit on the amazing idea of

breeding ideal hands. It was almost unbelievable.

"We'll work it out in time. Our hope is to combine the strength of the ox with the blind loyalty of the dog, the self-sacrifice of the egg-laying hen and the mentality of the jackass. It's revolutionary, but it can be done. When we succeed, our problem will be solved for all time."



The interview at an end, I applied for a pass to the training school. Being a friendly sort of person and knowing there could be no harm in granting the request, the Plutopist wrote out the order.

I began my tour in the kindergarten. There I saw a large class of children, all under five years of age. They were being taught how to use words. In unison they recited: "I want to work!"

"Very good," said the teacher. "Very good. Now try to put a little

more gladness into your voices."

With added enthusaism, the children yelled: "I want to work!"

It was inspiring.

Next came:

"Twelve hours a day! I want to work! Twelve hours a day!"

The teacher announced, a little later, that the children must say this 100 times each day, including Sunday. In the next class, the children are given little jobs. The mills were reproduced in miniature and the children were impressed with the fact that the greatest happiness would come when they became old enough to go into the genuine mills. In the miniature the youngsters tended machines that were as tiny as dolls and yet able to do satisfactory work. Incidentally, these children, despite the smallness of the tools, turned out quite an amount of goods, but, unfortunately, the output was not enough to cover expenses.

This was the fatal flaw in the system and undoubtedly was the reason why the 500 wanted to do away with it entirely and resort to having the children born with the idea of the virtue of work and the blessedness of producing for others.

As stated before, when the child becomes nine years old, a place is found in the mills. Up to then, the total cost of upkeep for each child is four and six-tenths of a cent per day.

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I heard a great commotion. The teachers were rushing about in terror. Something fearful must have happened. I rushed along with them and when the opportunity presented itself I asked the cause of this excitement.

"It's too terrible for words," answered the person to whom I had directed my question. "It's the first time such a thing ever happened."

"What?" I demanded.

"The children in the kindergarten were repeating their lesson a few minutes ago and everything was going nicely. They were saying 'I want to work' as they should when one boy forgot himself and said: 'I want a pair of skates!' It's too terrible! too terrible!"

And then, trying to excuse the slip, the teacher added:

"It may be a hereditary taint. It must be."

"What makes you think so?"

"It has been reported that this boy's father is a dangerous character who will bear watching. Once he made a remark to the effect that he thought it might be a good idea if the hands got four pills a day instead of three. Think of it! He actually proposed an increase in rations of 200 calories, or 1,400 a week. Oh, we must watch these hands. Even after the best kind of an education they are likely to get socialistic ideas."

"What will you do if they threaten to go on strike for the extra pill?"

"Oh, there are plenty of ways of handling the issue. If feeling gets strong and it begins to look as though they stand a chance of winning, we'll give in to them."

"Is it possible?"

"We will give in, but there won't be any real difference in the end. Let me explain. They get 600 calories a day, and as we control the manufacture of food-pills, we will give them four a day, but there will be 150 instead of 200 calories in each. That's one way. But I don't think it will ever come to that point. We have them too well trained."

Yes, Plutopia is a wonderful island. It will work as long as the hands consent to work. But so long as there are youngsters who crave a pair of skates and a grown-up who doesn't conceal his desire for an extra pill, there is a standing menace to the future security of Plutopia.